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Letter dated 7 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith the Tunis Declaration, adopted at the International Solidarity Conference on Climate Change Strategies for the African and Mediterranean Regions, held in Tunis from 18 to 20 November 2007 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly under agenda item 54.

(*Signed*) Habib **Mansour**
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Annex to the letter dated 7 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

International Solidarity Conference on Climate Change Strategies for the African and Mediterranean Regions

Tunis, 18 to 20 November 2007

Tunis Declaration

Governments, multilateral/bilateral organizations, corporations, non-governmental organizations and academics in the International Solidarity Conference on Climate Change Strategies for the African and Mediterranean Regions, held in Tunis from 18 to 20 November 2007, upon the initiative of the Government of Tunisia,

Express

Their gratitude to the Government of Tunisia for having taken the initiative of organizing this important event under the high patronage of His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia.

Commend

The initiative of the Government of Tunisia to organize the Conference, with the support of the Governments of the Netherlands, France and Italy, the World Sustainable Development Forum, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the Sahara and Sahel Observatory, the Mediterranean Action Plan, the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the World Health Organization, the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the Maghreb Arab Union (UMA) and numerous African subregions and countries of the region.

Consider that:

- Climate change represents one of the most preoccupying problems of the planet, given its effects on natural resources and on the health, food security, well-being and development of the whole international community, and that the mechanisms and means of action can be perceived only at the continental or regional level;
- The African and south Mediterranean countries, though they emit few greenhouse gases, are particularly vulnerable to climate change and, therefore, need to establish adaptation mechanisms and to develop attenuation and clean development techniques;
- The establishment and implementation of climate change adaptation programmes constitute an urgent necessity, particularly for African countries whose socio-economic development depends on the preservation of their natural resources;

- Climate change adaptation should be integrated within the sustainable development policies (social, ecological and economic), strategies and plans of developing countries, taking into consideration their legitimate priority needs, with a view to achieving sustainable economic growth and eradicating poverty (Millennium Development Goals);
- Synergies between Climate Change adaptation and efforts to combat other environmental problems, such as desertification, sand encroachment and biodiversity degradation, should be optimized in order to take advantage of the gains accomplished through these actions;
- Helping the most vulnerable countries to anticipate and adapt to Climate Change risks contributes to achieving development objectives, including those agreed upon at the international level, such as the objectives unanimously adopted at the Millennium Summit and those spelled out in United Nations conventions (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change — UNFCCC; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification — UNCCD; and Convention on Biodiversity — UNCBD.

Taking into consideration the:

- Legitimate priority needs of developing countries in terms of establishing sustainable economic growth and eradicating generalized poverty which limits their capacity for adaptation;
- Increasing pressure on natural resources and food security in Africa and the Mediterranean region;
- African countries' limited capacity for adaptation to climate change;
- Long experience of cooperation of certain developed countries with partner developing countries to curb poverty and reduce human and economic losses caused by climate change.

Bearing in mind:

- That the growing climate change challenges require the continuous development of scientific knowledge, transfer of technologies, building expertise and sharing experiences among all countries.

Declare that they will:

- Endeavour to incorporate climate change adaptation within development strategies;
- Strive to make sure developing countries in Africa and the Mediterranean region are capable of reducing their vulnerability to climate change and of defining national adaptation strategies, on the basis of which they will take the necessary adaptation measures to be integrated within their national and sector-based projects;
- Develop capacity and mobilize all human means and the necessary structures, at all levels, for elaborating and implementing climate change adaptation strategies;

- Reinforce capacities for public information and sensitization, at all levels, about the effects of climate change and ensure their incorporation within adaptation and mitigation programmes;
- Implement programmes for the transfer of relevant information and experiences and of appropriate technologies to the peoples who need them to elaborate national development strategies;
- Strengthen expertise, cooperation and solidarity for prevention and action against climatic extremes in the most vulnerable countries;
- Endeavour to promote renewable energies and energy efficiency in all sectors in order to attenuate the negative effects of climate change;
- Promote relations among the countries of the region in such a way as to guarantee for future generations the right to live in a propitious environment for development;
- Reinforce South-South and North-South cooperation while promoting the flow of information and free exchanges;
- Develop more efficient mechanisms of cooperation and support in order to enhance African countries' integration and adaptation to climate change;
- Seek to mobilize the necessary financial resources for establishing attenuation and adaptation strategies and the corresponding plans of action.

Ask that:

- Fighting climate change and adaptation to this change be placed at the top of the priorities of the international community, national authorities and civil society;
- Donor institutions and organizations, at the bilateral and multilateral levels, sustain the Governments of developing countries, especially the most vulnerable countries, in elaborating attenuation and adaptation strategies, and in establishing and implementing concrete projects and plans of action;
- Developed countries establish new mechanisms to materialize the principles of international solidarity and contribute to financing development, especially in African countries;
- Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and research institutions commit to support African and Mediterranean countries in implementing adaptation and attenuation measures, in order to counter the effects of climate change, eradicate poverty and promote development in the most vulnerable countries. The funding for adaptation on climate change should be additional to official development assistance funding for reaching the Millennium Development Goals;
- The United Nations be mandated to set up guidelines for the development and implementation of biofuels production in Africa, keeping in view the priority for food security and sustainable development in the continent;
- As the rich and developed nations have admitted during the Conference their role as major contributors to carbon emissions causing global warming which affects the African and Mediterranean regions the most, the participants in the

Conference have expressed the urgency for Africa and Mediterranean regions to pursue green development as their contribution to help to arrest climate change. However, this will be conditional on financing by the rich developed countries of the additional cost associated with such developments;

- Early warning systems for preparedness against any forthcoming disasters in the African and Mediterranean regions be introduced and strengthened.

Follow-up:

- The Declaration to be communicated during the high-level segment of the Conference of the Parties, thirteenth session/Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, third session, in Bali;

- The key messages should also be communicated during the upcoming United Nations General Assembly.

Immediate action/first step:

As an effort to offset the footprint of the International Solidarity Conference on Climate Change Strategies for the African and Mediterranean Regions, the Tunisian Government, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme and other multilateral/bilateral organizations, proposes to set aside a fund. This will make it possible to neutralize the emissions generated through this conference.